Nothing changes shape like clouds but rocks

This paper situates Gilbert Simondon's process of individuation at the geological scale of reality in and through an aesthetic approach to transindividuation: the process that is never purely private nor purely collective, but constantly happens across material, psychic and social processes at once.

From practices of collection, recording and archiving to museological taxonomies, fossils generate images of a past that cannot be experienced and yet is still sensible; in doing so, they expose broader systems of extraction and pressure political distinctions between domains of existence. In this sense, fossils embody the "presence of a distance": they resist totalisation, disclosing a form of existence beyond unity and beyond identity. The article is layered in chapters, each weaved in Simondon's individuation process. The first chapter follows Simondon's collective individuation within the infrastructure of the European Museum of Natural History, which emerges as anything but a "neutral" space for displaying "new" "discoveries," but as an active device that shapes perception and the way we make sense of history as well, prescribing not only how "Nature" should be seen, but also imagined and represented. The second part turns to psychic individuation in and through Robert Smithson's earthly poetics and Gaston Bachelard *reverie*, in the processes of genesis that involve erosion, fragmentation and stratification of both matter and memory. The final chapter articulates physical individuation, focusing on how fossils are materially formed and informed, looking specifically at the technique of their casting layout: a process by which "the original" organism decays leaving an imprint of its passage, sublimating into minerals. As casted technologies, fossils are configured as sites in which disappearance does not escalate into non-existence, but is integrated via adherence. The article argues that, through these scalar dimensions of reality, fossils disclose an example of an embodiment process that is not fixed or self-contained but dispersed and unstable, in Simondon's words, "metastable". Embodiment is a distributed agency situated across networks of material and symbolic relations that unfolds along the margins of fragmentation and indeterminacy.

Next figure, another hoodlum, another bad boy, scavenger, poet figure—he's called a Data Thief. 200 years into the future, the Data Thief is told a story: If you can find the crossroads, a crossroads, this crossroads, if you can make an archeological dig into this, you'll find fragments, techno-fossils. And if you can put those elements, those fragments together, you'll find a code. Crack that code, and you'll have the keys to your future.

The Last Angel of History[1]

[1] Black Audio Film Collective, The Last Angel of History, 1996 "a science fiction (with tropes such as alien abduction, estrangement, and genetic engineering) as a metaphor for the Pan-African experience of forced displacement, cultural alienation, and otherness"

Fossils appear as lumps of matter, fragments of cyborgian condition. "They are portals and an access key to worlds beyond consciousness in which language as it is understood has no structures, the perfect image of the human stumbling upon the mystery of traces and fragments."[2] Fossils are hybrid entities between organic formation and technical inscriptions. As time containers and generators, they unlock human memory to visions and experiences that exceed discursive articulation, eliciting forms of imagination that are not reducible to verbal-intellectual knowledge. This resonates with Quentin Meillassoux's use of the arche-fossils in *After Finitude*, where correlation is challenged in the access to the notion of ancestrality. In this sense, fossils are memories of a world with no gaze, traces of ontological independence that prove regimes of absolute contingency. In contrast, a Simondonian reading of fossils re-situates them within lattices that span time, matter and collectivity. As relational intensifiers, fossils circulate across heterogeneous registers of information—geological, energetic, epistemic—co-constituting a mode of existence that does not localise outside relation. In doing so, they fragment and disperse the understanding of the individual for the process of individuation that shapes it. What happens to information when it is detached from the notion of the body as a unity and disperses, in a centre distributed everywhere?

[2] L. Trevisani, *Fragment*, Dune vol. 002 n. 001, 2021 author's translation

Fossil forest exhibited in a diorama in the New York State Museum

Sea butterflies fall into a nameless ocean. The tracks of trilobites harden into fossils. Accumulations of waste on the sea bottoms. Jellyfish baking under the sun. Digestive systems shown in diagrams... A tendency to amorphouness....

Robert Smithson, *Strata: A Geophotographic Fiction*

Relations to fossils have long been structured along archives and inventories, practices of collection, comparison, and casting. Shell fossils are found in caves of the Mustering and Lascaux era, i.e. between 40,000,000 and 15,000 years BC, amidst real shells and shell-shaped objects. "Humanity is curious about the origin and loves antiquities so much that it cares about collecting fossil forms, comparing them with the rest of the collection and above all sculpting equivalent shapes."[3] We do not know what these practices *represent*, as Didi Huberman specifies, since the function of these archives and their meaning has gone lost, however, these practices *present* something, that fossils have long been circulating within systems of meaning making and knowledge production.

"How to see a genesis" is a question that obsesses the sciences of 19th century Europe, when the romanticisation in and through the aesthetic experience of the sublime meets the epistemic ambition of emerging scientific disciplines. While fossils have been present across perceptive and imaginative systems, the creation of newly established scientific institutions marked a decisive transformation in their status and a new phase in their individuation, oscillating between temporal tools of disorientation and instruments of ordered history and knowledge. Their "discovery" involve extraction and appropriation in and through scientific research and aesthetics practices. Before the first established Natural History Museum of London—which came after that of Histoire Naturelle of Paris, opened after the Revolution—it is by entering the British Museum that collections of artworks and relics, minerals and

[3] G. Didi-Huberman, *La Somiglianza per Contatto*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 2009

animal specimens are juxtaposed without classificatory boundaries. Paleontologist Richard Owens marks an institutional reconfiguration, where fossils stiffen within taxonomic orders of distinction between natural and artificial. In establishing separated criteria of judgment, they are positioned as elements of "natural order." For the public thus, it is no longer possible to *confuse* the images of the history of humanity with those of Nature, as the judgment criteria that apply to *natural* matter are not the same as those that can be applied to *artificial* matter. Biologist Thomas Huxley proposes for the Manchester Museum an itinerary whose logic points out the linearity of evolutionary theories, "on a path that allows for no deviations, lest the incomprehensibility of the narrative."[4] Alluquere Rosanne Stones writes that Nature becomes an ordering factor by which we attempt to keep technology *as visible*, as separated from our "natural" selves and our daily life. The museum operates as a site in which specific modes of seeing are prescribed by means of scientific normativities, effectively training viewers' imagination and perception: not only how Nature should be seen, but also imagined.[5] It is in this sense that for Merleau Ponty, perception is not a faculty that is given: *we learn to perceive*. While being displayed along laboratory tables—"plaster restorations collecting dust in the Museum of Natural History"[6]—the diorama is an example that represents fossils within a specific curated program. Configured as an open window, a frame, a god's trick or time machine, the diorama is a strategy that draws directly to an ancestral scene, as if no gaze was actually present: now is possible to hear a tyrannosaurus rex growl—it would not make any sound otherwise. Nevertheless, what appears as immediate, spontaneous access is an ongoing operation of selection, reconstruction and staging;[7]

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[4] Ibidem, p. 292. On contrasting approaches to museum designs, Garbin recommends consulting C. Yanni, *Nature's Museums,* pp. 111-115, 128-131

[5] Ibidem

[6] R. Smithson, *Strata. A Geophotographic Fiction,* Aspen, n. 8, item 12, 1970-1971

[7] Garbin specifies Henry Osborn, american palaeontologist and director of the American Museum of Natural History of New York, as largely responsible for shaping the visual imaginary of the Tyrannosaurus rex. In his preparatory drawings, made for the mounting and exhibitions of the skeletons, he envisions two specimens in the act of fighting for spectacular efficacy. Yet for spatial constraint this scenario was abandoned in favor of a single figure standing, with the jaws open. The earlier composition logic proved impracticable, and was replaced by a readable, monumental configuration. To do so, Osborn and his research group decided to add a certain number of vertebrae in order to ensure structural stability to the sculpture, reinforcing a visual impact adapted to a specific perceptive and didactic program. This "creative" solution, an aesthetic discipline, shapes how the notion of ancestrality can be accessed, made visible and intelligible. An artistic licence that can

in and through the diorama, the background becomes an atmosphere and the figure, a dinosaur's fossils in this case, is arranged in plastic poses whose morphological curation discloses taxonomic expectations on species, genus etc: vision is contained within a frame and is guaranteed by an implicit pact of verisimilitude.[8] Fossils then are not only *created* by Nature, but also *invented* across regimes of individuation that configure their activation and fruition, visibility and meaning, mediated by the notion of the *discovery*. Alongside the scientific function of knowledge production, the romantic investments upon notions of *creation*, *ancestry* and *original* contributes to the establishment of the past, a prestige, the fabrication of an idea of *antiquity*; the fascination for the *primitive* with the charm of *extinction* remains one of the main sentiments behind the fossil as a european trend and obsession. On the notion of creation, Maddalena Mazzocut-Mis writes "in the stratification of the shell the human subject has always wanted to recognize that to which it wants to belong to, a product that is its own, not so much for the technique that is expressed in it, as the mollusc emanates its shell organically, but for the mystery of creation that is hidden in it: a mystery that approaches the mystery of digestion (...)."[9]

Fossils do not trace back to an origin, but accommodate a continuous genesis; they fail to be determined in terms of natural creation or invented reproduction, maintaining, in this context, the tension between critical theory and scientific practices, locating in an excess that rather than being inaccessible is intensive: they open further possibilities of orientation while resisting any defined mode of representation. Reassembling the pieces and finding the fragments means also losing them—and oneself in attempting to do so—altogether; but who can say how the lost being should be seen? Gaston Bachelard writes: "It is surely an odd concretion of

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be found also in the most rigorous scientific approaches. Reference is made to E. Garbin, *Palaeontographica*, p. 109

[8] Garbin reports a quote by photographer Hioshi Sugimoto: "When I first arrived in New York in 1974, I visited many of the city's major tourist attractions, one of which was the American Museum of Natural History. Looking at the dioramas, I made a curious discovery: the stuffed animals placed in front of the painted backgrounds looked completely fake, but as soon as I tried looking at them with one eye, any sense of perspective disappeared and they immediately seemed real to me. I had found a way to see the world just as a camera does. No matter how fake the subject may be, when seen in a photograph, it looks as real as the real thing." K. Brougher, H. Sugimoto, P. Muller-Tamm, *Hiroshi Sugimoto*, Hatje Cantz, Berlin, 2010, p. 45 in E. Garbin, *Palaeontographica*, p. 293

[9] M. Mazzocut-Mis, *Animalità, idee estetiche sull'anima degli animali*, Le Monnier Università, Firenze, 2007

language that leads us to use the same words for two very different experiences: an object gets lost and we get lost. There can be no better way of showing that some words are heavy with complexes. (...) Getting lost—losing oneself—with all the emotions this implies, is therefore an obviously archaic situation."[10] Margarita Palacios and Anette Baldauf write that techniques on how to access, account, document, survey, interview, map, observe and archive data are also extractivist practices that, instead of introducing glitches and noise into normative regimes of systematisation, they often reproduce the same diffractive domains, ultimately absorbing the Other into the Same. In these terms, within the experiences of dispersion and indetermination, they call out for a *contamination*, "an account that unsettles the sovereignty of the "I" of the researcher, the "it" of the research object, and the "them" of the research audience. It situates all agents in a web of radical incompleteness, composed of entangled, unstable "we's"[11], which is, ultimately, the state of metastability we are already in.

Anterior memories: layers upon layers

"The sense of limit cannot risk the rhythm of dedifferentiation that swings between oceanic fragmentation and strong determinants."[12] Robert Smithson's article *A sedimentation of the Mind* digs into orders of thoughts. Excavation and extraction, in this context, do not reveal an origin or prove the existence of a totality, but expose layers of fragmentation that resists totalisation, discovering the fragments of thoughts to be memories of even greater fragmentations. "There are no mysteries in these vestiges, no trace of an end or a beginning."[13] The "elsewhere" as absolute contingency is the landscape of an anti-map made of "language of symbolic debris", wrecks, craps, gaps of non-site, entropy, "products of exhaustion rather of creation"[14] just as poetry, in Smithson words, poetry as always a dying language yet never dead.

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[10] G. Bachelard, *Earth and Reveries of Repose: An Essay on Images of Interiority,* 1948, Dallas Institute Publications, Dallas, 2011, p.155
[11] M. Palacios, A. Baldauf, "From Extractivism to Adjacency: A Research Manifesto", *Emancipations: A Journal of Critical Social Analysis*, Vol 2, Iss.1, Article 9, 2022
[12] R. Smithson, *A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects,*" Artforum 7, n. 1, 1968
[13] Ibidem
[14] Ibidem

Strata: A Geophotographic Fiction is an accumulated quotation of paleontological traces, assemblage of geological and textual fragments. The article operates as a form of "imprints archive" and dormant patterns reactivated by sparks, deflagrative processes that elude the very language that attempts to pin them down. These sparks—these memories—are not merely transferred from one experiencer to the other, but lie along that which one impression has in common with another. The text includes references to visions and mental states in which the human, animal and mineral realms converge, both mind and earth find themselves in a state of perpetual erosion.[15] Smithson uses fragments of quotation that become a form of intertextual subtitles, sedimented layers: "we live in the wreck of former worlds"; "submarine thoughts deepen"; "the burden of a million years: only the great horizon of the absent world reflected in the mind"; "language and soil bowl away. Floods"; "new mountain ranges appear, their names are immaterial—dull descriptions in a book"; "periods of abandonment"; "conglomerate of thoughts"; "acadian disturbance"; "quartz in the brain".[16] These ensembled gestures perform the "hydraulic" state of matter whose passage is nomadic: it contrasts the solid-sedentary state of matter-knowledge. A great deal of evolution, selection and adaptation processes can be recollected in these transductive passages that involve embodiment as a form of body dissipation. Manuel De Landa, extracted from a new materialist prospective, describes populations solidifying, coagulating and fluidifying in invasions, migrations, alliances, integrating within the minerality of earth—in the ossification of bones and kidney stones—and organicizing without, in the erection of walls and the development of technical objects[17]; in the present moment I am capable of propagating a series of gestures that disperse by means of crystals of silicate covered in an aluminium coat... And in this same instant, wars are consuming people, through the amplification that these crystals bear and the potentials that fossils bodies detain. Smithson writes: "one's mind and the earth are in a constant state of erosion, mental rivers wear away abstract banks, brain waves undermine cliffs of thought, ideas decompose into stones of unknowing, and conceptual crystallizations break apart into deposits of gritty reason. Vast moving faculties occur in this geological miasma, and they move in the most physical way. This movement seems motionless, yet it

[15] E. Garbin, *Palaeontographica*, p. 74
[16] R. Smithson, "Strata. A Geophotographic Fiction," *Aspen*, n. 8, 1970-1971, item 12
[17] M. Delanda, *A Thousand Years of Non-Linear History*, Swerve Editions, New York, 2000

crushes the landscape of logic under glacial *reveries*. This slow flowage makes one conscious of the turbidity of thinking. Slump, debris slides, avalanches all take place within the cracking limits of the brain." [18]

Gaston Bachelard's *reverie* provides the account of a "nebulous" state of consciousness that exceeds structural cognition and scientific polarisations. Rather than a concept, *reverie* describes a recursive movement that operates in a spiral or star-shaped manner, returning to its centre while projecting new rays. "In the Alps I am moved above all by the communication between rocks and clouds. I cannot see the trace of a cloud appearing, emerging from the mountainside, without feeling a humble emotion: isn't it like witnessing the birth of a being every time?"[19] The experience of the sublime can be grasped in its petrifying effect,[20] which is specifically grounded in an indeterminate and incomplete fashion. "Pseud-Logino," to which is attributed the tractatus *The Sublime*, "links this idea to that of depth, and later (...) metaphors of sinking will apply equally well to the dark depths of the earth as to the depths of consciousness. In these abysses, the self disperses and ends up discovering the very close presence of the Other."[21]

Katia and Maurice Krafft, two vulcanologists from Alsace, dedicated their entire life to the sublime not as a category of classification, in the form of as genus and species, but as a shared experience. More than scientists, more than film makers, their work shifts from the analysis of chemicals to the data collection in the form of geological tapes: the interior of the earth, its "blood", its metastable state in-formation. Maurice and Katia spend their life following the latches of edges of a polymorphic reality whose "mystery of creation" unfolds as a limit of life and death: "who is calling me from the hole stuffed with scraps of fabric?" "It is me," replies the open earth, the

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[18] R. Smithson, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects," *Artforum 7*, n. 1, 1968 in E. Garbin, *Palaeontographica*, p. 74

[19] E. W. Eschmann, *Entretiens dans un Jardin*, in G. Bachelard, *La Terra e le Forze*, Red Edizioni, Milano, 1989, p.179

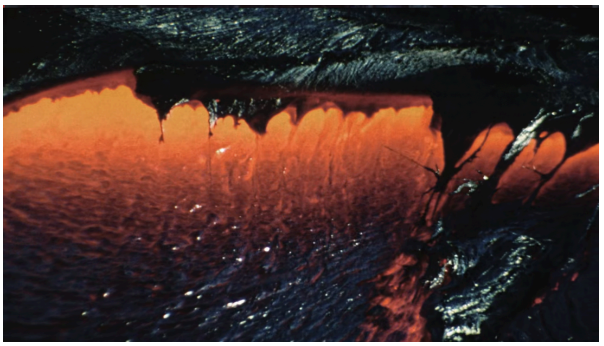
[20] "The Latin term *sublimis* derives from the preposition "sub" (under, near) and the adjective "limis" (oblique, sideways); or, according to a more reliable account, from the preposition "sub" and the noun "limen" (threshold, boundary) (...) The adjective *llimis* also describes an indirect and furtive gaze (...) or a complex upward movement that is, in any case, not orthogonal to the ground"; "The Greek equivalent of *sublimis* is *hypos*, which "commonly designates height, conceived as a dimension of space opposed to width and length, and which subsequently takes on the meaning of summit, peak, or pinnacle. (...)" B. Saint Girons, *The Sublime*, p. 70 in Emanuele Garbin, *Palaeontographica*, nota 26, p. 303

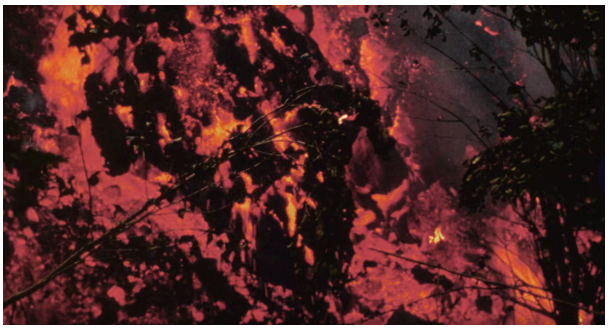
[21] E. Garbin, *Palaeontographica*, p. 303

hardened layers of unbreakable patience, the jaw of the floor."[22] The camera, in this context, is an extension of vision that broadcasts on screen tapes a form of information otherwise opaque to perception. The crystallisation, sublimation of explosive fragments of ash and lapilli, gas vents that gallop fast as Neptune horses, eruption plumes shot so closely that force the retreat of the observers: Katia and Maurice die together in a pyroclastic flow on Mount Unzen, in Nagasaki Japan, on June 3th, 1991. Their extensive archive of film tapes, records and shoots recollects the couple venturing into the waste lands of post-eruptive landscapes, where debris and ash subvert the familiar coordinates of perception, producing environments that appear alienated atmospheres of an unrecognisable reality. At the threshold of vision, where the chiasmic encounter between the technological and the human eye occurs, reality folds, not as ineffable but as a circuitry where "it" and "self" meet in "itself", sensing itself as an-other, exceeding in intensity any attempt at stabilisation—at becoming an object of knowledge. The images on tape, in this sense, are intermediary reality, intersubjective, transindividual, instances of saturation and discontinuity that take part of a process where each phase transforms into the next, no mercy allowed. In this sense, in Bachelard, author that Simondon was reading to his students, imagination has an "alternative" character toward the *other*, rather than toward *itself*; it is an intermediary reality that links macro and micro dimensions, imagination emerges as a "mechanism" for including otherness[23], maintaining open a magmatic, social dimension with the potential of political crystallisation.

[22] G. Bachelard, *Earth and Reveries of Repose: An Essay on Images of Interiority*, 1948, Dallas Institute Publications, 2011, p.31

[23] K. Saboulis in Senda Senico, *Imagination as Operation*, paper presented at the Simondon International Conference, Padova, 15-17 April 2026





Shots from *The Fire Within: A Requiem for Katia and Maurice Krafft* by Werner Erzog, 2022. Another documentary about their story and archive work is *Fire of Love* by Sara Dosa, 2022. If Sara starts from their life, Erzog begins with their death.

The genesis of a crystal

Dimension, topology, entropy, pressure constitute the external establishment of a configuration that is simultaneous to internal resonance and amplification: this is "the beginning" of Simondon's physical individuation. Nevertheless, to distinguish a "before" and an "after", causes and effects, would be monotonous as seeking the principle of individuation in the general or in the particular, for relation has the same status of reality of the terms themselves.

Simondon describes in chapter "Form and Energy" of *Individuation in Light of Notions of Forms and Information* a form of present consistency that is the reality of metastability: only information is present. "The individual does not just harbor a hylomorphic encounter; it stems from a process of amplification unleashed in a hylomorphic situation by a singularity, and it extends this singularity."[24] Information is not a content or a given, pre-given, but a series of events by which a metastable system resolves a disparity—an incompatibility between heterogeneous orders of communication—triggering vectors of structurations. Growth is indefinite, and it has an internal historicity for which each of its layers is structured and configures the amorphous milieu surrounding it. In this sense, as Simondon writes, the crystal exemplifies an indefinite power of growth and as such, is taken as an example of physical individuation, the first of the processural formation that also includes psychic and collective ones. While the development of a crystal might be interrupted, reaching conditions of stability, it can never be considered completed.

"Relation" is that which includes an historical aspect in its own genesis, which means, relation is that which bears a postulate, a reference, that allows for its genesis to be accomplished. Genesis does not emerge from a fixed origin, nor it culminates in a final state, it unfolds continuously as a condition of existence: being is not only a relationality, relation has the status of being. For this same logic, physical individuation cannot be determined by a principle, i.e. a structural germ, it configures in phases while it is unbounded to them: margins of indetermination cannot collapse strictly into cause nor into effect. Nevertheless, this process neither

[24] G. Simondon, *Individuation in Light of Notion of Forms and Information*, Minnesota University Press, Minneapolis, p. 74

refers to itself for itself, isolated, as Leibnizian monads: "it does not matter that the monad processes within itself a recapitulation of the modification of the monads of the whole universe as a microcosm in the form of little perceptions. (...) The limits of its successive determinations are rigorously fixed by the system of universal compossibility." In Leibnitz's monad, as in Quentin Meissilleaux's arche-fossil, the world is represented internally and the fossil, in this case, as outcome of individuation, is an isolated system with no windows, fully determined; for Simondon, the world is co-constituted externally and interiority, just as exteriority, becomes a phase within a broader transductive movement.

In between life and non-life, organic and inorganic, the growth of a crystal is in between nature and technology, creation and invention. In this sense, fossils are apparitions: inscribed imprints of a periphery that continuously disappears. The genesis of fossils often implies a negativity that emerges within processes of modulation, stratification, fold and recursion. In most of the cases the organic body of fossils, "the original,' has vanished, leaving the casting of a shape: an internal model, which repeats the morphology of the inside, and an external model that retains the imprint of the surface. Their relation is not simply that of a correspondence, or verosimilitude, but a process in which distance is integrated into adherence. When the organic body dissolves, a cavity as a negative volume retains the three-dimensional shape. Each local deposition of mineral matter modifies the *conditions* for subsequent ones, resulting in a cast that supports both the residual organisation of the organic body and the physiochemical properties of the environment. This cast does not restore the original but rearticulates it as reproduction, generated at the threshold of opacity. "It is still an index, that is, something that is connected to its origin by a physical contact that becomes a matrix, generator of a physical and concrete relationship with reality."[25] Fossils then are not traces of sublimated preservations, hardened, closed and quasi-opaque; as imprinted forms, they are potentials, open, quasi-transparent: neither the original nor the copy, they exist in metastable tensions as nodes of a disparation process which includes disappearance and reconfiguration. What is reproduced is never identical to the original, as reproduction transforms the conditions of appearance, just as formation

[25] L. Trevisani, *Fragment*, Dune vol. 002 n. 001, 2021

proceeds through negative modulation, where the *dissolution* of the original is also included as a *generative* condition for another mode of existence. In the context of individuation of living forms Simondon writes: "At the moment an individual dies, its activity is incomplete. One could say that it will remain incomplete for as long as individual beings survive that are capable of re-actualizing this active absence, this seed of consciousness and of action."[26]

The "negative" process described is a form of relation that entails the "presence of a distance." In this way Walter Benjamin, in his work on mechanical reproduction, defines the notion of *aura*,[27] already largely speculated upon in european art history, critics and philosophy as well. In another text he continues: "to perceive the aura of something is to invest it with the ability to look back at us."[28] Proust writes that some mystery lovers want to believe that something in objects is retained from the gazes that have touched them,[29] and the diorama aforementioned is just but one attempt in this direction. Nevertheless, the capacity of things to "look back" at us does not imply any vitality, mysticism or teleology; it refers instead to an *haecceitas*,[30] an intensity: present because its thickness is a site of tropism, distant because it ensures

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[26] G. Simondon, *Individuation in Light of Notions of Form and Information*, Part II, Minnesota University Press, Minneapolis, 2022, p. 272

[27]"Einmalige Erscheinung einer Ferne, so nah sie sein mag" author's translation "The definition of aura as *the unique appearance of a distance*, however close it may be, is nothing other than the articulation of the cultural value of the work of art within the categories of spatiotemporal perception (...) Unapproachability is one of the principal qualities of the cultural image. By its very nature, it remains a distance, however close it may be. The proximity that can be wrested from its material form does no damage to the distance it retains after its appearance." W. Benjamin, *L' Opera d'Arte nell'Epoca della sua Reproducibilitá Tecnica*, Einaudi, Milano, 2014, p. 12, note 23

[28] W. Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *Harvard Selected Writings 1938-1940,* Vol. 4, p. 338

[29] "Certain minds which love mystery like to believe that objects preserve something of the eyes which have looked at them" M. Proust, *Alla Ricerca del Tempo Perduto*, Vol 7, Chapter III, Mondadori, Milano, 1993, author's translation

[30] "*Haecceity* is sometimes written as *ecceity*, deriving the word from *ecce*, "here is." This is an error, since Duns Scotus created the word and the concept from *haec*, "this thing." But it is a fruitful error because it suggests a mode of individuation that is distinct from that of a thing or a subject." G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Mille Piani* in P. de Assis, *"Gilbert Simondon's 'Transduction' as Radical Immanence in Performance,"*in *Virtual Works—Actual Things: Essays in Music Ontology*, Orpheus Institute, Ghent, 2018, p. 706. de Assis continues: "Whereas Duns Scotus' *haecceitas* is "a non-qualitative property responsible for individuation and identity, [which is] supposed to explain individuality", Simondon's *eccéité* is modal, pointing to a never-finished process of emergence or appearance ("there is"). But Simondon keeps the Duns Scotian focus on the "thisness" (a *haecceitas*, from the Latin *haec*, meaning "this") as opposed to a "whatness" (a *quidditas*, from the Latin *quid*, meaning "what")

reproducibility, includes otherness, alterity, remaining unbounded to representation. In other words, *aura* is the presence of distance because it is relational, local and historical: relational because adheres to a postulate which remains implicit, emerging within a field of mediation; local because it occurs as an event of encounter, excessing its immediate presence; historical because it appears as bearer of time. Palacios and Baldauf may name the aura in terms of "adjacency," an experience of excess and proximity that lies beyond the extractivist encounter.

To inscribe this discourse within Simondon's terms is to look at fossils as pre-individual potentials that remain unresolved. Pre-individual is to say more-than-unity, more than identity: other than itself. These potentials are not exhausted either in their formation nor in their discovery, neither in their creation nor in their invention. Through extraction, circulation, modulation and transformation, they reboot systems of assemblages. In this sense, fossils are not inert remains but *operators* of transindividual passages, mediation between material, psychic and social processes. Carbon, oil and fossil fuels, as energetic substrates, preserve and transform pre-individual potentials—motor tendencies, pre-perceptive images, encounters between organisms and environments, energetic potentials, capacities of transformations—that are amplified and actualised within other regimes of individuation, presiding and excessing transindividual processes in industrial, technological, and political configurations. In these passages symbolic and semantic systems also emerge. Ultimately, the "presence of a distance" should not be read as an animistic or messianistic connotation of matter endowed with "agency", rather, it is an event within transindividuality: a continuity of operations that links nature and technology, imagination and invention. Nevertheless, this continuity unfolds only outside unity and identity, as a form of mediation: it does not only refrain within temporal and psychic registers of information, but also across different regimes of individuation, from geological strata to global networks of production, power and exploitation as well.

By tearing apart figures from their backgrounds, centres and peripheries, their surplus and intensities, a phantasmatic form of embodiment emerges: it exceeds the limits of corpo-reality. The deflagrating, uncanny and familiar experience of existence

and non-existence, in their simultaneous existence, cannot but describe a paradox and a tropistic condition: localities, individuation nodes, individuals, are coordinates of a collective orientation that exceeds the notion of singular body and personal consciousness. If these fragments are dispersed across a centre distributed everywhere, embodiment is then a form of transindividuation: a continuous genesis in which interiority and exteriority, subjects and objects are local coordinates that only appear as axioms. Embodiment, in this sense, entails forms of sensibility and motricity that are distinct from perception. If the latter presupposes structured forms of cognition and recognition, sensibility involves the capacity of forms to drift, to deviate, to enter new regimes of individuations: sensibility is a margin of indeterminacy,[31] an horizon or periphery where potentials may resolve in unrepresentable, relational, collective ways.

[31] This margin and the drift recalls Lucretio's *clinamen*, described in *De Rerum Natura* as a minimal deviation occurring at uncertain times and places, in and through which parallel trajectories of atoms enter into relation.